

# NATURAL HISTORY MISCELLANEA

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## Variation in the Size of Eggs of the Turtles

*Chelydra s. serpentina* (Linné) and *Sternotherus odoratus* (Latreille).

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The dearth of available information concerning the eggs and young of even the most common of American turtles has been lamented for a long time by American herpetologists. Unfortunately this situation will probably endure for some years since opportunities for making the necessary observations are few and far between. The occasion for this note is presented by collections of 44 musk turtle eggs and 30 snapping turtle eggs that were found in sand piles on the beach of Camp MacLean, Burlington, Racine County, Wisconsin. Unfortunately, the eggs had been uncovered before they were called to my attention so it was impossible to take notes on either clutch size or nest construction. All of the eggs were discovered June 29, 1949; the *Chelydra* eggs were measured that day, and the *Sternotherus* eggs two weeks later.

All of the snapping turtle eggs were roughly spherical in shape, white, tough and leathery. They ranged from 24.3 to 27.5 mm. in greatest diameter, mean  $25.9 \pm .36$  mm., and standard deviation 1.98. Cahn (1937, p. 43) states that eggs he studied measured "about 33 mm. on an average."

In length the musk turtle eggs varied from 23.4 to 28.9 mm., mean  $26.7 \pm .29$ , and standard deviation 1.9. In width these eggs ranged from 14.2 to 16.6 mm., mean  $15.1 \pm .17$ , standard deviation 1.2 mm. Risley (1933, p. 697) presents data on 75 eggs that ranged from 24.0 to 31.0 mm., mean 27.1; maximum diameter 14.2 to 17.0 mm., mean 15.5.

### LITERATURE CITED

Cahn, Alvin R.

- 1937** The turtles of Illinois. Illinois Biol. Monog., vol. 16, no. 1-2, p. 1-218, text fig. 1-6, maps 1-20, pl. 1-31.

Risley, Paul L.

- 1933** Observations on the natural history of the common musk turtle, *Sternotherus odoratus* (Latreille). Papers Michigan Acad. Sci., Arts and Letters, vol. 17, 1932, p. 685-711, fig. 78, 79.

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